

BUMED Oral History Project

Interview Synopsis and Glossary

| **Narrator/Interviewee:** Captain (ret.) Judy
Costello Brinckerhoff, NC, USN

| **Date and Location of Interview:** 18 April
2014 at the Lab School, Washington, DC

| **Interviewer:** André B. Sobocinski, BUMED
Historian

CAPT Judith Costello Brinckerhoff grew up in Darien, CT. She is the daughter of World War II Veterans. Her mother, Gladys Golden, was an Army Nurse Corps Officer and her father, Richard Francis Costello, served in the Navy during World War II and the Korean Conflict. Her brother, CAPT Richard Dennis, SC, USN graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1974.

Costello grew up watching her mother polish her white Clinics. Her mother did not want Judy to become a nurse. She warned her daughter about long hours, weekends and nights away from family. She encouraged her to teach or study law. Judy decided to study nursing. She studied nursing at Skidmore College.

In college, Judy considered career options. She was inspired by the fictional adventures of Ensign Nelly Forbush. She yearned for a nursing career that would provide the adventure, independence and tropical excitement of South Pacific.

One evening Judy and a classmate met with a Navy nurse recruiter (and future Director of the Navy Nurse Corps) Mariann Stratton. The meeting took place in the dorm of the college's NYC building. It didn't take long for Stratton to convince Judy to apply for the Nurse Corps Candidate Program. Judy was selected for the program, took the oath of office in New York and entered the Nurse Corps Candidate Program in 1971.

Judy graduated in 1972. Her first duty station was NH Corpus Christi. After one tour, Ltjg Costello returned to graduate school at the University of Texas at San Antonio (MSN, 1975). She was recalled to active duty in April 1976 and served as department head for staff oncology, general medical and surgery, intensive care, renal dialysis, family medicine, pediatrics, ambulatory care, combat casualty care and staff development in Navy hospitals and clinics stateside and overseas.

LT Costello was the Nurse Corps Officer in Chinhae, South Korea in 1979, a historical time in South Korea. President Park Chung Hee was assassinated in October 1979 and the country was ruled under Martial law during her tour of duty.

LCDR Costello married Clarke William Brinckerhoff on her return to Washington DC in January 1981. They have two daughters, Lucy (1987) and Christina Rose (1992).

In 1983, Brinckerhoff was one of the first Nurse Corps Officers assigned to a medical department role with the 2XXX

designator. Prior to 1983, Nurse Corps Officers were only assigned to 2900 billets or traditional Nurse Corps billets. The 2XXX career option allowed Nurse Corps Officers to co-serve with Medical, Dental, and Medical Service Corps peers in expanded or "triple X healthcare roles."

Brinckerhoff was assigned to a newly created billet, Department Head for Quality Assurance Department, Naval Medical Command National Capital Region. There was no job description and it was up to Brinckerhoff and the other nurses in the QA Head Role to determine the course and objectives of the job. Brinckerhoff and her peers at the Regional Headquarters created the GEOCOM Quality Assurance performance description. Peers Joan Huber and Susan Ellis held similar roles in the Northeast and Pacific Region GeoComs. This role focused on quality of care and hospital accreditation issues. Adverse patient outcomes and growing public relations concerns were plaguing the reputation of peacetime Navy Medicine. Chiefly, the Navy's flagship Hospital, Bethesda, had failed a Joint Commission Accreditation and the hospital's Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery had been indicted on manslaughter charges for the unexpected deaths of patients. Also at issue, the Navy's all volunteer medical officer recruitment and adverse action reporting practices had come under scrutiny.

Brinckerhoff served on the staff of Admiral Richard Schaffer at the Naval Medical Command, National Capital Region. She was appointed Officer in Charge of the Medical Executive Treatment Unit (METU). She assumed primary responsibility for advance plans and hospital appointments and admissions for Presidents Reagan and Bush.

In 1986, CAPT Brinckerhoff reported to the Navy Inspector General's Office (IG). She was promoted to CDR under Vice Admiral John "Jack" Fetterman and later served for RADM Ming Chang. In this role, Brinckerhoff assumed primary oversight responsibility for healthcare quality for the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and the Secretary of the Navy (Office of the Navy Inspector General). This role included responsibility for the quality of medical care provided in Navy medical and dental treatment facilities worldwide. Brinckerhoff reviewed and analyzed problems related to the study of adverse events in the medical care of patients and recruitment of officers. She also analyzed patterns of untimely deaths, surgical mishaps, suicides, pharmacy related deaths, and complications related to access to healthcare. She served with Captain Joan Engel who later was promoted to Admiral and appointed Director of the Navy Nurse Corps.

CAPT Brinckerhoff was one of first Nurse Corps Officers screened for and assigned to Executive Leadership Positions in Navy Medical Care System. She served five years (1989-1994) as a staff advisor to the

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs representing 50,000 health care providers and serving 9,000,000 DoD beneficiaries worldwide. In this role she developed health care policy and prepared reports to Congress; she authored DoD Directives related to hospital accreditation, credentials and clinical privileges, health care personnel licensure, safety and risk management, adverse actions, health care provider misconduct, malpractice reporting, and medical readiness; and she managed a complex array of quality initiatives related to direct and purchased health care. Brinckerhoff also served as an advisor to DoD on policies related to nurse anesthesia and the proposed graduate school of nursing at the Uniformed University of the Health Sciences, access to care for handicapped children in the DoD School system, and playground safety standards.

A year after retiring from the Navy in 1994, Brinckerhoff charted a new course as a school nurse. First serving as a primary substitute and part-time School Nurse at Beauvoir, The National Cathedral Elementary School, Washington DC (1995-2006), she would later create the role of School Nurse at The Kingsbury School, Washington, DC (2006-2009). In the fall of 2009, Captain Brinckerhoff moved to the Lab School of Washington (LSW) where once again she became the first school nurse. At the time of this interview, CAPT Brinckerhoff was in her fifth year at LSW.

Glossary

Air Florida Crash (1982)— On January 13, 1982, Air Florida 90 crashed into the 14th Street Bridge in Washington, DC, and fell into the Potomac River shortly after taking off. A total of 70 passengers, four crew, and four motorists on the bridge were killed. The crash of the Boeing 737 was due to an anti-icing system being left off, which caused an inaccurately high engine pressure ratio (EPR) indication at an extremely low power setting, and the crew's failure to either abort the takeoff or apply maximum engine power.

Berry Plan—Armed Forces Physicians Appointment and Residency Consideration Program (or Berry Plan). Conceived in 1954 by Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Frank B. Berry (1892-1976), the Berry Plan allowed for physicians to be deferred from military service while pursuing training in medical specialties that they would use in their two-year military commitment. The adoption of the all-volunteer military force in 1973 marked the end of the Berry Plan.

Bruzek-Kohler, Christine, RADM (ret.), NC, USN—served as the Director of the Navy Nurse Corps (2005-2009). She served as the Commanding Officer of the Navy Medical Center San Diego, Calif. and Navy Medicine West from 2009 to 2010.

Chang, Ming, ADM, USN—Admiral Chang served as Inspector General of the Navy (1987-1990).

Colgan, Dianne, CAPT (ret.), MC, USN—CAPT (ret.) Dianne Colgan, MC, USN is a world renowned plastic surgeon who began her career in the Navy reaching the post of Chief of Plastic Surgery at National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD.

Darien, CT - Located between Norwalk and Stamford, Darien is located in Southwestern, Connecticut.

Eisold, John, RADM (ret.), MC, USN—RADM (ret). John Eisold, MC, USN. From 1976 to 1979, Eisold completed his Internship and Internal Medicine Residency at the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC). He was the Chief Medical Resident from 1979 to 1980 and later established the General Internal Medicine Division and Hypertension Clinic at NNMC in 1980 and serving as Division Head until 1985. He served as the Chairman, Department of Internal Medicine 1988 to 1994. Eisold served as the Attending Physician to Congress from 1994 to 2005.

Elsass, Phyllis, CAPT (ret.), NC, USN—Elsass was a former CO of Naval School of Health Sciences, Bethesda, MD. Elsass was one of the first Navy nurses to screen for command (1982).

EpiPen® Auto-Injector—is a disposable, pre-filled automatic injection device that

administers epinephrine in the event of a severe allergic reaction. EpiPens contain epinephrine, a medication that can help decrease the body's allergic reaction by: relaxing the muscles in the airway to make breathing easier, helping to reverse the rapid and dangerous decrease in blood pressure, and relaxing the muscles in the stomach, intestines and bladder. (source: <http://www.epipen.ca/en/about-epipen/what-is-epipen>)

Gallery, Daniel, RADM, USN (1901-1977)–

Gallery was an officer in the United States Navy who saw extensive action during World War II. He fought in the Battle of the Atlantic; his most notable achievement was the capture of the German submarine *U-505* on June 4, 1944. In the post-war era, he was a leading player in the so-called "Revolt of the Admirals" – the dispute between the Navy and the Air Force over whether the U.S. Armed Forces should emphasize aircraft carriers or strategic bombers. He was also a prolific author of both fiction and non-fiction.

Geographical Commands (GeoComs)–To address perceived inadequacies the Navy Medical Department reorganized on October 1st, 1982. Hospitals in the continental United States were divided into regions with the largest treatment center in the area hospital the geographical commander and staff. Hospital commanders in the region would report to the geographical commander who would report to

the Commander of the Naval Medical Command (formerly the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery). The Geographical Command experiment ended in 1989.

Johnson, Raymond B., CAPT (ret.), MC, USN— CAPT Johnson was the first African American to be appointed Commanding Officer of the Naval Regional Medical Center in Newport, R.I. A year later he was the first African American to be appointed Commanding Officer of the Naval Hospital in Bethesda, MD, a job he held until 1985 when he retired from active military service. (source: www.dartmouth.edu).

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO)—now known as the Joint Commission—is a United States-based nonprofit tax-exempt organization that accredits more than 20,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States. A majority of state governments recognize Joint Commission accreditation as a condition of licensure and the receipt of Medicaid reimbursement.

The Lab School of Washington—LSW is an independent school in Washington, DC with world-wide recognition for the education of students with learning differences and disabilities (e.g., dyslexia, ADHD, etc). It was founded by American educator Sally Lieberman Smith, formerly the Director of

the Graduate Program in Learning Disabilities (1976-2007).

Martin, Mary—Actress/Singer (1913-1990)—In 1949, Martin originated the role of Navy nurse ENS Nellie Forbush in the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, South Pacific.

Murray, Stuart, VADM, USN (1898-1980)—Stuart Shadrick Murray was a Vice Admiral of the United States who served during World War II. In the 1920s, Murray was involved in constructing the submarine base at Pearl Harbor. Murray took command of the Missouri in May 1945 and was responsible for the preparations for the signing of the surrender of WW2 on 2 September 1945.

Mycosis fungoides—disease in which lymphocytes (a type of white blood cell) become malignant (cancerous) and affect the skin (source: www.cancer.gov).

Navy's Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)—EFMP is designed to assist sailors with the special needs of their Exceptional Family Members (EFM), at new duty locations. Assistance is emphasized in the assignment process, but also includes family support from Fleet and Family Service Centers. EFMP case liaisons are located throughout the fleet to provide information and referrals, individualized service plans, and case management from one duty station to the next. Special needs include any special medical, dental, mental health,

developmental or educational requirement, wheelchair accessibility, adaptive equipment or assistive technology devices and services. (www.public.navy.mil/)

Regan, Donald "Don" (1918 -2003)—Regan was the 66th U.S. Treasury Secretary (1981-1985) and Chief of Staff (1985-1987) in the Reagan Administration.

Sarcoidosis—the growth of tiny collections of inflammatory cells in different parts of your body – most commonly the lungs, lymph nodes, eyes and skin.

Shaffer, Richard, RADM, DC, USN (1934-2012)—From 1984 to 1989 Shaffer served as the Commander of the National Capital Region, Chief of the Navy Dental Corps and Assistant Chief of the Bureau and Surgery for Dentistry. He retired in February 1989.

Shea-Buckley, Frances, RADM (ret.), NC, USN—Shea served as the Director of the Nurse Corps from 1979 to 1983.

Skidmore College—Skidmore College is a private, independent, liberal arts college in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Stratton, Mariann, RADM (ret.), NC, USN—Stratton served as the Director of the Navy Nurse Corps from 1991 to 1994. Brinckerhoff was recruited by Stratton in 1972 while still a student at Skidmore College.

